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ABSTRACT

This special newsletter issue on inclusion of students with disabilities includes the following articles: "Inclusion: A Responsible Approach" (Harley A. Tomey, III); "Research Base Limited on Effects of Inclusion" (Thomas P. Lombardi); "Research Supports Inclusion for Physically Disabled--Vocational Ed Prevents Dropping Out"; "National Survey Identifies Inclusive Education Practices"; "What Does Federal Law Require?" (presents summaries of major legislative acts and judicial decisions); "Defining the Least Restrictive Environment"; "Working Forum Finds Sense of Community, Co-Teaching among Traits of Successful Inclusive Schools"; "Forum Suggests Ways, by Role Group, To Create More Inclusive Schools"; and "Policies and Position Statements on Inclusive Schools" (from major educational associations). The newsletter also contains statistical data on the number of children, ages 6 to 21, served under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, by disability, for the years 1991-92 through 1993-94 for the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. (DB)

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The LINK

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Special Issue

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INCLUSION: A Responsible Approach

by Harley A. Tomey III, Virginia Department of Education

Why the controversy over inclusion? In part, the issue comes from the disagreement among professionals, parents, and others about the meaning of inclusion. Instead of debating this issue, the focus should be on full implementation of the least restrictive environment regulation. The goal of education should be to provide students, including those with learning disabilities,* with the opportunity and necessary supports that will allow them to become independent, productive, and socially involved citizens who are committed to life-long learning. With this goal, the full implementation of the least restrictive environment for many students with learning disabilities will be within the general education classroom with appropriate supplementary aids and services: i.e., full inclusion.

For others, however, the least restrictive environment may mean part-time or full-time education in special classes or special schools. We need to remember that there are students with learning disabilities who, due to the nature and severity of their disability, will require intense systematic instruction that may not be available or is not common in the general education classroom. Meeting the unique educational needs of these students may require the use of part-time or full-time special classes. Thus, meeting the individual needs of the student must remain the goal of any discussion of inclusion. With this in mind, there are several issues that must be addressed to make the general education classroom an environment that will enable students with learning disabilities to achieve their goals.

Shared Vision

First, a shared vision is essential. The basis for any change is found in an organization's values and beliefs, as articulated by its philosophy and mission statements. A school's philosophy is a statement of general principles that underlie the education of students, including those with learning disabilities, and the school's mission statement sets forth the overall goal(s) for the delivery of services. The development of these statements must involve the entire school community, which includes teachers, support personnel, administrators, parents, students, and the community-at-large. For inclusion to be successful and meet the educational needs of students, including those with learning disabilities, this community needs to share a common vision and beliefs. In many cases, this may necessitate a shift in attitudes about students with learning disabilities, how they are taught, and what can be expected of them. School leaders are critical in facilitating this change in attitudes and must play an active, positive, and supportive role for change to occur. However, one must remember that change, regardless how large or small, is a process, not an event, and takes time.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Once there is consensus relative to the school's vision, beliefs and goals, the staff must determine the role and responsibilities of individual teachers, support personnel, and administrators. All those involved with the education of students, including those with learning disabilities, need to develop a

(continued on page 4)

*While this article uses the term learning disabilities, its message also applies to all students with special needs, including students identified as behavior disordered, mentally retarded, and sensory impaired. Harley A. Tomey III, is education specialist in learning disabilities at the Virginia Department of Education in Richmond. He is a vice president of The Orton Dyslexia Society and chairs its Branch Development Committee. This article first appeared in *Perspectives*, Special Issue, The Orton Dyslexia Society, Volume 20, No. 4, Fall 1994.

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To our readers:

During nearly 14 years of publishing *The Link*, we've tried to provide you with state-of-the-art education information—the latest research, hot topics, and controversial issues. Our main goal, however, is to give you information that will be useful to you in your service to the education community. Also, we try to offer something for everyone, because we serve many audiences—teachers, administrators, policymakers, higher educators, parents, and community leaders, among others. To better serve you, we routinely ask for your opinion about *The Link* through reader surveys. Our most recent survey asked you to suggest topics for a theme issue. You had some good ideas. We shared them with other AEL staff and asked them to help select the topic for this theme issue. After much consideration and discussion, we settled on **inclusion**.

This was a tough one. Every piece of inclusion literature seemed to offer something important. We had to make some difficult decisions as to what would and would not be included.

Obviously absent from this issue is a discussion of the problems surrounding inclusion, and we are well aware that they exist. We know that special-needs students are sometimes placed in regular classrooms where teachers lack proper training and support services (e.g., appropriate staff development, teachers' aides, necessary resources, etc.). The results can be disastrous. But we didn't think a discussion of cases where inclusion is being poorly implemented would be a good use of our limited space. We thought information about responsible, successful inclusion efforts might be more valuable.

Also, you won't see lengthy philosophical discussions about the rightness or wrongness of inclusion. The courts are sending a strong message that inclusion must be done and, therefore, we believe such debates are of little value. However, we are aware that staunch advocates as well as opponents exist. We hear about teachers trained to work in regular classrooms—they never intended to work with special-needs children—who feel ill-prepared and often uncomfortable teaching such a diverse mixture of students. On the other hand, some teachers are finding tremendous fulfillment in working with all types of students—seeing them learn from each other and experience the social benefits of just being in class together.

We know that inclusion is an emotionally charged issue for parents as well. Some fight vehemently to have their special-needs children placed in regular classrooms. Others are fighting just as hard to keep their children in separate, special education classrooms or schools, fearing that these services may some day disappear. Parents of regular education students have concerns too. Some worry about the interruptions and disturbances that can occur when special-needs children are placed in regular classrooms. They wonder how much of the teacher's time and attention is being diverted from their children. Other parents are pleased with the experiences their children are getting as they are educated alongside special-needs students.

Administrators' responses to inclusion run the gamut as much as those of teachers and parents. Some resist any form of inclusion, while others mandate it, but without the appropriate support. Other administrators encourage teachers to try proven inclusive practices or create their own, and provide them the planning time and other necessary

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aids. And we note that, as schools implement inclusion, administrators must deal with the frustrations of both teachers and parents.

A great deal has been said about inclusion. So, in deciding which material to keep and which to eliminate, we went back to our old rule of thumb. We've tried to provide information that is useful, serves the interests of our various audiences, and fits within the standard sections of *The Link*—Research Notes, Noteworthy, Around the Region, and Inside AEL.

Once we had what we judged to be a final draft, we sought the advice of several professionals outside AEL: a special education expert in a state department of education, a mother of a special-needs child who also holds a degree in special education, and a professor of special education who conducts training on a national level and has published widely on the topic of special education.

We hope you find this issue interesting and useful, and we're always interested in your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to write or call us.

—Carolyn Luzader, Editor

Glossary

ADA—Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities at work, at school, and in public accommodations, and is not limited to those organizations and programs that receive federal funds (like Section 504).

Continuum of program options [services]—a full range of education and related services to accommodate an individual student's characteristics, needs, abilities, and interests in accord with the principle of least restrictive environment.

Continuum of [alternative] placements—the range of levels of service that must be available to students with disabilities (see page 10).

Cooperative or team teaching practices—regular and special education classroom teachers work together to determine appropriate education methods, materials, professional development, and supportive services.

Dumping—the practice of placing special-needs students in regular education classrooms without the appropriate supplementary aids and support services.

General or regular education—general curriculum classes led by regular (as opposed to special) education teachers.

Inclusion—the commitment to educate children with disabilities, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the schools and classrooms they would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services).

IDEA—Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (see page 9).

IEP—Individualized Education Program (or Plan)—a detailed, written education plan—based on the specific needs of an individual child—describing annual education goals and services needed to reach those goals, developed by a team that includes the child's teachers, specialists in the area of disability, and parents.

Integrated environment—classrooms that include both special and general education students.

LRE—least restrictive environment regulation (PL 94-142, as amended by PL 99-457 and PL 101-476), which provides that ". . . to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, [must be] educated with children who are not handicapped . . . ." (see page 10).

Mainstreaming—although not found in law, the term is commonly used to refer to the practice of placing special education students in general education classes for a part of the school day, usually in nonacademic settings.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—prohibits programs that receive federal dollars from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. It requires public schools to make accommodations for eligible handicapped children, whether or not they qualify for special education services under IDEA. A **504 plan**—similar to an IEP—spells out the modifications to be made for an eligible handicapped child.

Special education—specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a child with disabilities.

Supplementary aids and services—aids and services provided to help disabled children benefit from special education. They are unique for each child and should be specified in the child's IEP. They can include classroom aides; consultation and training for the teacher; electronic aids and services such as computers, speech synthesizers, etc.; and medical monitoring equipment.

(*continued from page one*)

common set of expectations about each other. Therefore, in an inclusive environment, it is necessary to identify for each student with a learning disability:

- who will provide the services needed: i.e., identifying the role each staff member plays in the provision of services;
- how will the services be provided: i.e., defining the needed teaching arrangement(s) and including any modification and adaptations needed by the student;
- when will the services be provided: i.e., the frequency and duration of the special education and related services; and
- where will the services be provided.

Staff Development

Another critical issue is staff development. The lack of preparation of school staff is a common obstacle to successful inclusion. Staff development must be ongoing and well planned. This training must address the needs of the school community and incorporate effective interventions that will be supportive for students, including those with learning disabilities. Thus, staff development may address skills in effective communications, team decisionmaking, team interaction, and cooperative learning. Other areas of staff development may include study-skills instruction, social-skills instruction, systematic multisensory instruction, direct instruction, understanding learning differences, and the use of collaboration and cooperation. This training should lead to supportive networks for both students and staff. For the student, this may include cooperative learning, buddy systems, and peer tutoring. For the school staff, it may include collaboration, team teaching, co-teaching, child study committees, and other cooperative arrangements.

Informed Parents

As with any change involving students, parents are key stakeholders in the process. They must be informed, considered as equal partners, and involved in the planning process from the beginning. Parents may have some of the following concerns regarding inclusion:

- Will my child learn as much and as effectively?
- What level of involvement will I have in the decision regarding my child's educational needs and placement?
- Will school staff be provided with training necessary to address the educational needs of my child?
- Will flexibility for my child be assured?
- Who will make sure that the general and special education staffs communicate and work together so that my child's educational needs are met?
- Can I be assured that support systems, including needed related services, will be available to meet my child's specific needs?

Flexibility

Finally, flexibility in the learning environment is vital. While inclusion is a goal for all students with learning disabilities, placement decisions must be based on the specific needs of the student, as identified in the student's individualized education program (IEP). Thus, a continuum of alternative placement options must be available to each student. This flexibility allows parents, school staff, and the student to make decisions based on educational needs. It is reckless to believe that one environment, either the general education classroom or the special education classroom, will always adequately meet the educational needs of all students with learning disabilities. Placement decisions must be carefully made, and if a placement does not work as well as anticipated, changes should be made quickly. The student should not be made to endure an inappropriate placement. The system must be flexible to allow for responsible inclusion, which incorporates the availability of a continuum of alternative placement options.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while inclusive education in the general education classroom is the ultimate goal for all students with learning disabilities, it must be accomplished in a reasonable manner. Forcing inclusion on an educational community will only create barriers. However, inclusion can be successful when the educational community shares goals and decisionmaking, staff roles and responsibilities are defined, staff is well trained, parents are informed, and the educational environment is flexible. It is imperative that the IEP for the student with learning disabilities focus on meeting the student's unique needs.

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RESEARCH NOTES

Research Base Limited on Effects of Inclusion

by Thomas P. Lombardi, West Virginia University

Although the literature abounds with mission statements, philosophies, theories, principles, opinions, perceptions, and guidelines, few studies exist on the efficacy of inclusion for the broad range of students who are eligible for special education. Most information is in the form of case studies. Following are some noteworthy studies:

- Halvorsen and Sailor (1990) reviewed 261 studies that compared special-needs students in integrated placements with their peers in segregated placements. They concluded that the students in the integrated programs more often reduced inappropriate behaviors, increased communication skills, exhibited greater independence, and engendered higher parental expectations.
- The Learning Together Project (Corbin, 1991), conducted in east central Minnesota, targeted students in five elementary schools for full inclusion in general education classrooms. Previously, these students had been educated in segregated classrooms. As a result of the new placement, parents reported greater growth in both academic and social learning. Teachers found that the regular education students maintained their academic performance, were understanding and accepting of the disabled students, and became role models for the students with disabilities.
- The Ravenswood (WV) Project (Lombardi, Nuzzo, Kennedy, and Foshay, 1994) assessed the perceptions of 36 teachers, 96 parents, and 232 students regarding an integrated high school inclusion program. All groups were supportive of the program. Positive results included a decrease in dropout rates for students with disabilities, fewer classroom disturbances, and reasonable academic gains. Of the 36 students who had been in resource rooms and special classes, all preferred the regular classroom placement over their previous placement.
- A related study of the cost-effectiveness of inclusion was conducted in Madison, Wisconsin. Piuma (1989) found that, over a 15-year period, the employment rate for high school graduates with special needs who had been in segregated programs was 53 percent. But for special-needs graduates from integrated programs, the employment rate was 73 percent. The cost of educating students in segregated programs far exceeded the cost of educating them in integrated programs. These findings are similar to those of a study by Affleck, Madge, Adams, and Lowenbraun (1988), which showed that the integrated classroom program for students with special needs was more cost-effective than the resource program, even though achievement in reading, math, and language remained basically the same in the two service delivery systems.

Thomas P. Lombardi is professor of special education at West Virginia University. He is author of Phi Delta Kappa's Fastback 373, *Responsible Inclusion of Students with Disabilities,* from which this article was taken. A certified Strategy Intervention Model trainer, Lombardi provides training, workshops, and consultation for schools and industry nationwide.

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Research Supports Inclusion for Physically Disabled—
Vocational Ed Prevents Dropping Out

Though the state of research on the effects of special education and inclusion remains muddled because of selection bias, problems of measurement, and inconsistencies in classification criteria among school districts, new findings from the *National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students* (NLTS) lend some support to inclusion advocates. The most recent phase of the study, which tracked the postschool progress of about 8,000 young people with disabilities, analyzed the effects of their secondary school experiences on their later success in continuing education, employment, independent living, and ability to participate fully in community life and activities outside the home.

Students with ***physical disabilities*** were the biggest winners. Those who spent ***all*** of their class time in regular education were 43 percent more likely to be competitively employed after graduation than their peers who spent only ***half*** their class time in regular education. They were also 41 percent more likely to be full participants in community life, and showed smaller advantages in every other category as well. Students with ***sensory disabilities***, such as impaired hearing or vision, also showed small positive differences.

For those with mild [learning] disabilities—the largest group of students—and those with severe impairments, spending all of their school time in regular education classes produced no advantage. "This difference in impacts," the researchers concluded, "supports the hypothesis that regular education benefits youth cognitively equipped to absorb regular high school coursework." There is no evidence that full-time participation in regular education classes had significant negative effects on students with disabilities.

These results are far from conclusive, however, even for the students with physical disabilities who appear to have benefited most from regular education—again because of selection bias and other problems with the research design. "One should not interpret these relationships as implying that regular education necessarily caused improvements in outcomes," the researchers warned. "Rather, it is possible that unmeasured competencies of youth themselves confounded these relationships." In other words, it is possible that, because of the imprecision of skills scales and other measures, the students who were fully integrated were actually more competent to begin with than the segregated students with whom they were compared.

The most unambiguous finding of the NLTS is the importance of vocational education. More than two-thirds of emotionally disturbed youth who dropped out of school were in jail within three years, the study found. But vocational education kept such students in school. Youth with mild disabilities [who took vocational education] were 36 to 40 percent more likely to be employed after graduation and earned significantly more money than peers who did not take vocational courses. Such coursework also improved the likelihood of full community participation after graduation, especially for those with mild disabilities.

For further information: M. Wagner, J. Blackorby, R. Cameto, and L. Newman. *What Makes a Difference? Influences on Postschool Outcomes of Youth with Disabilities*. SRI International, 333 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025-3493; 415/326-6200; 1993.

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National Survey Identifies Inclusive Education Practices

The National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion (NCERI), The Graduate School and University Center, The City University of New York, has undertaken a national survey to identify inclusive education programs. Chief state school officers in each state were contacted and asked to identify local districts where inclusion activities were taking place, including information about policy, funding, and evaluation. Districts identified were then contacted and asked for information concerning their program, including the sources of its initiation, the number and handicapping conditions of the students involved, the nature of the inclusion program, changes in classroom practices and curriculum, consequences for staffing and school organization, parental involvement, evaluation activities undertaken, and materials developed. The report identifies factors necessary for inclusion to succeed, as well as teaching models and classroom practices that support inclusion.

Factors Necessary for Restructuring and Inclusion

Based upon the National Center's survey and review of the research, seven factors are necessary for inclusion to succeed:

1. **Visionary leadership**. An Indiana superintendent, commenting about what is necessary for inclusion to succeed, said it only took two things: "leadership and money." As to leadership, three elements are critical: (1) a positive view about the value of education to students with disabilities; (2) an optimistic view of the capacity of teachers and schools to change and to accommodate the needs of all students; and (3) confidence that practices evolve, and that everyone benefits from inclusion.
2. **Collaboration**. Reports from school districts show that inclusive education presumes that no one teacher can—or ought to—be expected to have all the expertise required to meet the educational needs of all the students in the classroom. Rather, individual teachers must have available to them the support systems that provide collaborative assistance and enable them to engage in cooperative problem solving. Planning teams, scheduling of time for teachers to work together, recognition of teachers as problem solvers, conceptualizing teachers as front-line researchers—all of these are tools necessary for collaboration.
3. **Refocused use of assessment**. Traditionally, student assessments have been used as screening devices—to determine who gets into which slot. In special education, a myriad of studies point to the inadequacy of this screening. Inclusive education schools and districts report moving toward more "authentic assessment" designs, including the use of alternative measures of performance, attention to portfolios of students' work and performances, and generally working to refocus assessment. They also report that assessment is used not just as a standardized measure but one that builds a greater understanding of individual student needs. It is not used as a marker of teacher success or to measure one district's or building's performance against that of another.
4. **Support for staff and students.** Two factors are reported for successful inclusive programs: systematic staff development and flexible planning time for special education and general education teachers to meet and work together. A key factor in the planning process with teachers is the involvement of parents and, when possible, the student in the planning process. From the vantage point of students, supports for inclusion often mean supplementary aids and support services. Districts report that these include: assignment of school aides, full- or part-time, short- or long-term; curriculum adaptation; provision of needed therapy services, integrated into the regular school program; peer support; "buddy systems" or "circles of friends"; and effective use of computer-aided technology and other assistive devices.
5. **Funding**. The federally funded Center for Special Education Finance confirms earlier research

Worth Quoting

"One of the greatest myths is that full inclusion obligates a public school district to educate ***every*** student with a disability in a regular classroom for the ***entire*** school day. Full inclusion doesn't mean that. It means students with disabilities might be placed in a regular classroom on a full-time basis, but, if appropriate and necessary, they still can be 'pulled out' for special instruction or related services .... The determination must be made on a case-by-case basis for each child. And it should begin with the idea of placement in a regular classroom and only then move to the more restricted setting—not vice versa." (Jean B. Arnold and Harold W. Dodge, "Room for All," *The American School Board Journal*, October 1994)

that the particular funding formula used by a state has consequence for student placement and inclusion. In most states, the funding formula used to support special education encourages separate programs. Rather than supporting placement patterns, school districts reported wanting funding to follow students. In Vermont, for example, the changes in the funding formula were reported as an essential factor in the promotion of inclusive education for all students.

6. **Effective parent involvement**. Schools and districts conducting inclusion programs reported that, in the past, parental involvement had been more perfunctory than substantive, more a matter of honoring due process procedures than enhancing the educational experience. Inclusive schools report encouraging parental participation through family support services and educational programs that engage parents as co-learners with their children. Programs that bring a wide array of services to children in the school setting report at least two sets of benefits—the direct benefits to the children and the opportunities provided for parents and other family members to become involved in school-based activities.

Models and Classroom Practice that Support Inclusion

The national survey reports differing roles for teachers in several models of inclusive education:

- **a co-teaching model**, where the special education teacher co-teaches alongside the general education teacher;
- **parallel teaching**, where the special education teacher works with a small group of students from a selected special student population in a section of the general education classroom;
- **co-teaching consultant model**, where the special education teacher still operates a pull-out program, but also co-teaches within the general education classroom several hours a week;
- **a team model**, where the special education teacher joins one or more general education teachers to form a team that is then responsible for all of the children in the classroom or at a particular level; and
- **methods and resources teacher model**, where the special education teacher, whose students have been distributed in general classes, works with the general education teachers.

The following classroom practices have been reported as supporting inclusive education:

- **Multilevel instruction** allows for different kinds of learning within the same curriculum. Here the focus is on key concepts to be taught, alternatives in presentation methods, willingness to accept varying types of student activities and acceptance of multiple outcomes, different ways in which students can express their learning, and diverse evaluation procedures.
- **Cooperative learning** involves heterogeneous groupings of students, allowing for students with a wide variety of skills and traits to work together. Differing models of cooperative learning are reported as giving greater emphasis to the process of the group's work and to assessing outcomes for individual members as well as the team as a whole. Individual districts using cooperative learning declare that it promotes students' planning and working together.
- **Activity-based learning** gives emphasis to learning in natural settings, the production of actual work products, and performance assessment. It moves learning from being solely a classroom-based activity to encouraging and preparing students to learn in community settings.
- **Mastery learning** focuses on the specifics of what a student is to learn and then allows sufficient opportunities for her/him to gain "mastery." Inclusive schools using mastery learning report attention to relearning, reteaching, and consideration of students' learning styles.
- **Technology** is often mentioned as being a support for students and teachers. Uses include record keeping, assistive devices such as reading machines and Braille-to-print typewriters, and drill and instructional programs.
- **Peer support and tutoring programs** are reported as having multiple advantages. Placing students in instructional roles enhances the teaching resources of the school. It is mentioned as positive for both the students and the student tutors. It recognizes that some students learn by teaching others. Such programs place students at the center of the learning process.

For more information about this study, contact the National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, The Graduate School and University Center, The City University of New York, 33 West 42 Street, New York, NY 10036; 212/642-2656; 212/642-1972 (FAX).

West Virginia Study Looks at Inclusion in Other States

In October 1993, the West Virginia Departmental Disabilities Planning Council released a national study that highlights strategies to make inclusion a successful experience for students with disabilities, their teachers, and classmates. Conducted for the Council by Dianne Greyerbiehl of the University of Maryland, the study included surveys of teachers and administrators in every state and in-depth interviews with 10 model states.

Greyerbiehl's findings show that the states most successful in implementing inclusion:

- promote positive values and beliefs about students with disabilities;
- develop a philosophy and plan for inclusion that involves all stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administrators, legislators, business and community leaders;
- provide training for inclusion;
- provide sufficient support to the general education classroom (a range of support should be available to the regular classroom teacher, including classroom aides, availability of specialist help when needed, reduced class size, and adequate training and materials);
- utilize collaborative teaching strategies; and
- establish site-based management teams and forums (all model states have some type of local planning group at the building level that involves major stakeholders, particularly teachers, parents, and building administrators).

(Source: *West Virginia School Journal, Vol. 122*, No. 10: June 1994)

What Does Federal Law Require?

LEGALLY SPEAKING

The Constitution of the United States guarantees that all citizens have "equal protection of the laws" and are not to be deprived of "life, liberty, or property, without the process of law" (Amendments 5 and 14). The three federal laws that protect individuals with disabilities—Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B (IDEA); and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)—base their authority on these constitutional principles (Latham and Latham, 1992). Language found in these laws—"least restrictive environment" (34 CFR §300.550), "most integrated setting appropriate," and "not separate or different" (34 CFR §104.4)—relates to the same constitutional principles, and is also used to support the practice of inclusion. Inclusion, therefore, reflects the intent of the law that children with disabilities be educated with their nondisabled peers to the extent possible or appropriate, according to constitutional guarantees for all citizens.

Most students with disabilities in public elementary and secondary schools receive special education and related services under either Section 504 or IDEA, since ADA was not meant to duplicate education services provided by existing legislation. The following excerpts from various sources provide information about the legal requirements of Section 504 and IDEA, particularly as they pertain to the concept and practice of inclusion.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that:

> "A recipient [of federal funds] to which this subpart applies shall educate, or shall provide for the education of, each qualified handicapped person in its jurisdiction with persons who are not handicapped to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the handicapped person. A recipient shall place a handicapped person in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Whenever a recipient places a person in a setting other than the regular educational environment pursuant to this paragraph, it shall take into account the proximity of the alternate setting to the person's home." (34 CFR 104.34)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA requires that school districts place students with disabilities in the "least restrictive envi-

ronment appropriate" and that they offer these students "a continuum of alternative placements." Excerpts from the law appear in the box below.

These regulations appear to require that schools make a significant effort to find an inclusive solution for a child. But how far must schools go? In recent years, the federal courts have interpreted these rules to require that children with very severe disabilities be included in the classroom they would otherwise attend if not disabled—even when they cannot do the academic work of the class—if there is a potential social benefit, if the class would stimulate the child's linguistic development, or if the other students could provide appropriate role models for the student. Educators need to be aware of such developments in the federal courts, because court findings in one case tend to set precedent for future courts considering similar matters. These developments suggest that parents are increasingly able to go to the courts in attempts to require reluctant school districts to include their children in "regular" classes in situations where the child may not be able to "keep up" with the standard work of the class (Rogers, 1993).

Throughout the literature on inclusion, six court cases to date have been viewed as significant. School districts can use the courts' rulings in these cases to help assess the legality of their own inclusion ef-

Least Restrictive Environment

§ 300.550 General.

(a) Each State educational agency shall insure that each public agency establishes and implements procedures which meet the requirements of § § 300.550-300.556.

(b) Each public agency shall insure:

(1) That to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and

(2) That special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

§ 330.551 Continuum of alternative placements.

(a) Each public agency shall insure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of handicapped children for special education and related services.

(b) The continuum required under paragraph (a) of this section must:

(1) Include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under § 300.13 of Subpart A (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions), and

(2) Make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

§ 300.552 Placements.

Each public agency shall insure that:

(a) Each handicapped child's educational placement: (1) is determined at least annually; (2) is based on his or her individualized education program; and (3) is as close as possible to the child's home;

(b) The various alternative placements included under Reg. 300.551 are available to the extent necessary to implement the individualized education program for each handicapped child;

(c) Unless a handicapped child's individualized education program requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school which he or she would attend if not handicapped; and

(d) In selecting the least restrictive environment, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services which he or she needs." (34 CFR 300.552)

Comment. Section 300.52 includes some of the main factors which must be considered in determining the extent to which a handicapped child can be educated with children who are not handicapped. The overriding rule in this section is that placement decisions must be made on an individual basis . . . .

The analysis of the regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 . . . includes several points regarding educational placements of handicapped children which are pertinent to this section:

1. With respect to determining proper placements, the analysis states: ". . . it should be stressed that, where a handicapped child is so disruptive in a regular classroom that the education of other students is significantly impaired, the needs of the handicapped child cannot be met in that environment. Therefore regular placement would not be appropriate to his or her needs . . . ."

2. With respect to placing a handicapped child in an alternate setting, the analysis states that among the factors to be considered in placing a child is the need to place the child as close to home as possible. Recipients are required to take this factor into account in making placement decisions. The parent's right to challenge the placement of their child extends not only to placement in special classes or separate schools, but also to placement in a distant school, particularly in a residential program. An equally appropriate education program may exist closer to home; and this issue may be raised by the parent under the due process provisions of this subpart.

§ 300.553 Nonacademic settings.

In providing . . . nonacademic and extracurricular services . . . each public agency shall insure that each handicapped child participates with nonhandicapped children . . . to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that child.

Comment. Section 300.553 is taken from a new requirement in the final regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. With respect to this requirement, the analysis of the Section 504 Regulations includes the following statement: "[A new paragraph] specifies that handicapped children must also be provided nonacademic services in as integrated a setting as possible. This requirement is especially important for children whose educational needs necessitate their being solely with other handicapped children during most of each day. To the maximum extent appropriate, children in residential settings are also to be provided opportunities for participation with other children."

§ 300.554 Children in public or private institutions.

Each State educational agency shall make arrangements with public and private institutions . . . to insure that § 300.550 is effectively implemented.

Comment. Under section 612(5)(B) of the statute, the requirement to educate handicapped children with nonhandicapped children also applies to children in public and private institutions or other care facilities. Each State educational agency must insure that each applicable agency and institution in the State implements this requirement. Regardless of other reasons for institutional placement, no child in an institution who is capable of education in a regular public school setting may be denied access to an education in that setting.

[34 CFR §§ 300.550 - 300.554 (1992).]

forts. Arnold and Dodge (1994) provide a discussion of these cases.

• ***Greer v. Rome City School District*** (11th Circuit Court, 1992). The Rome City (GA) School District wanted to place Cristy Greer, a 10-year-old with Down's syndrome, in a self-contained classroom that wasn't in her neighborhood school. Cristy's parents objected; they wanted her in regular education classes at the school closest to their home. The 11th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals held for the parents, saying the district violated provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Specifically, the court said, "before the school district may conclude that a handicapped child should be educated outside of the regular classroom, it must consider whether supplemental aids and services would permit satisfactory education in the regular classroom. The school district must consider the whole range of supplemental aids and services, including resource rooms and itinerant instruction, for which it is obligated under the Act and the regulations promulgated thereunder to make provisions.

"Only when the handicapped child's education may not be achieved satisfactorily, even with one or more of these supplemental aids and services," the court said, "may the school board consider placing the child outside of the regular classroom."

Rome City had considered only three options for Cristy: the regular classroom with no supplemental aids and services, the regular classroom with some speech therapy only, and the self-contained special education classroom. In weighing only these limited options, the district did not comply with the IDEA's mandates, the court determined.

As for the district's argument about the cost of providing those aids and services, the court said a district may not decline to educate a handicapped child in a regular classroom because the cost is incrementally more expensive than educating the child in a self-contained special education classroom.

On the other hand, the court said, a school district cannot be required to provide a handicapped child with his or her own full-time teacher, even if this would mean the child would get a satisfactory education in a regular classroom.

• ***Sacramento City Unified School District v. Holland*** (9th Circuit Court, 1994). In this case, the court considered the Sacramento, CA, school district's proposal that 9-year-old Rachel Holland, a child with an IQ of 44, spend half of her school time in a special education classroom and half in a regular education classroom. The parents challenged the district's proposal, stating that they wanted Rachel in a regular classroom full time.

The lower court decision said IDEA creates a strong preference for mainstreaming, imposing on the school district the burden of proving the child cannot be mainstreamed. In making its decision, the court considered the factors outlined in *Daniel R.R.*, a 1989 Texas case (see page 14). In that case, the court found that under IDEA, a disabled child must be educated in a regular classroom if the child can receive a satisfactory education there, even if it is not the best academic setting for that child. The court noted the importance of the nonacademic benefits of mainstreaming, such as improved self-esteem and increased motivation. The Holland case adopted these findings.

In considering the effect of the child's placement on others, the court in the Holland case held that the school district must consider all reasonable means to minimize the demands on the teacher. "A handicapped child who merely requires more teacher attention than most other children is not likely to be so disruptive as to significantly impair the education of other children," the court said. "In weighing this factor, the school district must keep in mind its obligation to consider supplemental aids and services that could accommodate a handicapped child's need for additional attention."

On appeal, the 9th Circuit Court upheld the

Worth Quoting

"Although mild disabilities are relatively common (affecting about one child in ten), severe disabilities are far less common (affecting only about one child in a hundred). Thus, if four or five children with severe disabilities are placed with the same class of about 25 children, it is statistically extremely unlikely that the classroom is actually the room to which all of those children would possibly have been assigned if they had not been disabled. This is not inclusion. Such arrangements tend not to be beneficial to any of the children in the class—and create extremely frustrating work environments for the teachers assigned to such classes. It is easy to see why teachers in such situations might feel ineffective or exploited! Inclusion works when all staff members in the school accept their fair share of responsibility for all the children who live within the school's attendance area." (Joy Rogers, "The Inclusion Revolution," *PDK Research Bulletin*, No. 11, May 1993)

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decision of the lower court. And in doing so, it adopted a **four-part balancing test** to determine whether a school district is complying with the provision of IDEA that requires placement of children with disabilities in a regular classroom to the maximum extent appropriate. The factors considered in the balancing test: (1) the educational benefits of placing the child in a full-time regular education program, (2) the nonacademic benefits of such a placement, (3) the effect the child would have on the teacher and other students in the regular classroom, and (4) the costs associated with full-time placement in a regular education program.

The court rejected the school board's argument that it would lose up to $190,764 in state funding if Rachel wasn't enrolled in a special education class at least 50 percent of the day and that it would cost more than $100,000 to educate Rachel full time in a regular classroom. The court found that any comparative cost analysis should weigh two considerations: the cost of placing the student in a special class of approximately 11 other children, with a full-time special education teacher and two full-time aides; and the cost of placing her in a regular class with a part-time aide. The school district had offered no evidence of this cost comparison, and the court found that the cost factor did not weigh against mainstreaming Rachel.

Finally, the appeals court said the Sacramento district's proposition that the student must be taught by a special education teacher ran directly counter to the congressional preference that children with disabilities be educated in regular classes with children who are not disabled. Accordingly, the court rejected this, as well as all of the district's other arguments, in upholding the lower court's ruling in favor of "including" Rachel Holland in a regular education program.

• ***Oberti v. Board of Education of the Borough of Clementon (NJ) School District*** (3rd Circuit Court, 1993). The student in this case is Rafael Oberti, an 8-year-old Down's syndrome child with severely impaired intellectual functioning and communication skills. (Rafael's disability places him among the lowest 1 percent of the population.) His parents wanted Rafael included full time in a regular education classroom. The school district had proposed putting Rafael in a self-contained program because of his severe disability and highly disruptive behavior.

The 3rd Circuit Court affirmed a district court decision that Rafael be provided with a more inclusive educational placement. Specifically, the circuit court highlighted three factors for courts to consider in determining whether a child with disabilities can be educated satisfactorily in a regular classroom with supplementary aids and services.

First, the court should consider whether the school district made reasonable efforts to accommodate the child in a regular class. The school is required to "consider the whole range of supplemental aids and services, including resource rooms and itinerant instruction." The school also must attempt to modify the regular educational program to accommodate a disabled child.

Second, courts should compare the educational benefits the child would receive in a regular classroom (with supplementary aids and services) with the benefits to be had from a segregated, special education classroom. Expert testimony will have to be relied upon heavily in considering this factor. However, courts must pay special attention to the benefits a child may obtain from integration in a regular classroom—such as development of social and communication skills from interaction with peers who aren't disabled—that cannot be achieved in a segregated environment. Thus, a determina-

Special Education Legislation 1974 - 1994

1975—*Education of All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142 or EHA)* requires that a free and appropriate education and related services be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and that an individualized education plan (IEP) be written for each student.

1983—*P.L. 98-199*: Amendments emphasize planning for transitional services for secondary students and authorize parent training and information centers.

1986—*P.L. 99-457*: Amendments extend the provisions to children ages 3-5, and create a discretionary early intervention program for children 2 and younger.

1990-91—Congress renames EHA the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 101-476 and P.L. 102-119 or IDEA). IDEA expands the definition of disabilities (formerly handicaps) to include autism and traumatic brain injury; and adds new related services—therapeutic recreation, assistive technology, social work, and rehabilitation counseling.

1994—Congress begins considering recommendations for IDEA's reauthorization in 1995, including a provision that specifically addresses the inclusion of disabled students in regular classes.

(Source: *Educational Leadership*, December 1994/January 1995)

tion that a disabled child might make greater academic progress in a segregated program might not warrant excluding that child from a regular classroom.

Third, courts should consider the effect the inclusion of a child with disabilities might have on the education of other children in the regular classroom. The 3rd Circuit recognized that, although inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms might benefit the class as a whole, a disabled child might be "so disruptive in a regular classroom that the education of other students is significantly impaired."

Moreover, if a child causes excessive disruption in class, the child might not be benefiting educationally in that environment. Accordingly, if the child has behavioral problems, the court should consider the degree to which these problems could disrupt the class. In addition, the court should consider whether the child's disabilities will demand so much of the teacher's attention that the teacher will ignore other students.

If, after considering these factors, the court determines that the child cannot be educated satisfactorily in a regular classroom, the court must consider whether the school has included the child in school programs with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

• ***Connecticut Association for Retarded Citizens v. State of Connecticut Board of Education*** (District Court, Connecticut, 1993). This suit was brought by the parents of four mentally retarded students. The parents were seeking class certification—that is, they wanted their lawsuit accepted as a class action, claiming their children had been inappropriately denied special education instruction in regular classrooms. The District Court of Connecticut rejected the request for class certification, saying the appropriate level of integration for children with disabilities must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

This case is significant because it points out the IDEA requirement that every special education placement be based on an IEP. Furthermore, the court found that some children with disabilities may not benefit from full inclusion in the regular classroom.

• ***Statum v. Birmingham Public Schools Board of Education*** (Middle District Court of Alabama, 1993). Here, an Alabama court heard an appeal of a hearing officer's decision, which affirmed the Birmingham school district's recommendation to change the placement of a 7-year-old girl with physical and mental disabilities ranging from severe to profound. The student had been in a regular education kindergarten (with accommodations), but the district's placement team recommended a self-contained program.

The girl's mother maintained her daughter would continue to benefit from a regular education placement, if provided with adequate supplementary aids and services. The court agreed. It first determined that the burden of proof was on the district, because district officials wanted to remove the student from the regular classroom. The court then concluded the district failed to demonstrate that the student couldn't be satisfactorily educated in the regular education setting. Specifically, the district failed to show (1) that the self-contained program would enhance the student's education, (2) that the student's IEP goals and objectives could not be implemented within the regular classroom with supplementary aids and services, (3) that implementing these goals and objectives within the regular classroom would have an adverse effect on other students in the class, and (4) that the costs of the supplementary aids and services necessary to educate the student in the regular classroom would impair the district's ability to educate other students.

The court ordered the district to educate the student in the regular classroom with appropriate supplementary aids and services for the duration of the school year.

• ***Poolaw v. Parker Unified School District*** (Federal District Court, Arizona, 1994). In this case, a federal district court in Arizona upheld a school district's recommendation to place a child in a residential placement, contrary to his parents' desire that he be educated in the regular classroom. For a number of years, Lionel Poolaw, a profoundly deaf 12-year-old, was educated in a regular classroom, with supplementary aids and services, including resource-room instruction, speech and language therapy, assistance from a teacher for the hearing impaired, and a full-time certified interpreter. Poolaw's parents moved into the Parker Unified School District, where Lionel was again enrolled in a regular education placement and again received resource assistance as well as speech and language therapy. He was not, however, provided with a teacher for the hearing impaired or a full-time inter-

preter. When the district proposed moving Lionel to a state residential school for the deaf and blind, the boy's parents disagreed and filed suit in district court after two due process hearings upheld the school district's recommendation.

The district court, applying the *Daniel R.R.* test (see next article), ruled in favor of the school district. The student's records from another state, which the school district relied on, clearly documented the failure of a four-year effort to mainstream Lionel in a public school setting with supplemental aids and services. After presenting a thorough analysis of the facts and applicable law, the court held that the benefits of a mainstream placement for Lionel were minimal and that these benefits were significantly outweighed by the fact that his educational needs could be met appropriately only by the placement the school district recommended.

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Defining the Least Restrictive Environment

One court case that can be particularly helpful in defining least restrictive environment (LRE) is *Daniel R.R. v. State (TX) Board of Education (1989)*. The 5th Circuit Court developed a standard for determining when placement full time in a general education class, with supplementary aids and services, is appropriate and when removal to a special education class is justified. The first step in this process, the court held, is to "examine whether the state has taken the steps to accommodate the handicapped child in regular education." That is, whether it has provided supplementary aids and services and modified the regular education program to meet the needs of the student. If the state has failed to do this, then it is in violation of the law. In making these accommodations, the court set forth two limits: (1) the general education teacher is not required to devote all or most class time to the child with a disability and (2) the general education program need not be modified beyond recognition.

The next step, the court held, is to determine whether the child will benefit from this modified general education program. The benefits to be examined included academic achievement, but they are not limited to it. The court stated that "[i]ntegrating a handicapped child into a nonhandicapped environment may be beneficial in and of itself." Finally, the court stated that school districts may examine the effect of the disabled child's presence on other children. The standards for this are narrowly drawn. This case established several questions districts can use to decide whether a disabled child can be educated satisfactorily in the regular classroom. Arnold and Dodge (1994) explore these questions and suggest that a school district weigh its answers to each before removing any child from the regular education classroom.

1. **Have you taken steps to accommodate children with disabilities in regular education?** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires school districts to provide supplementary aids and services and to modify the regular education program in an effort to mainstream children with disabilities. Examples of these modifications include shortened assignments, note-taking assistance, visual aids, oral tests, and frequent breaks. The modifications should be geared to each disabled child's individual needs.

2. **Are your district's efforts to accommodate the child in regular education sufficient or token?** A school district's efforts to supplement and modify regular education so disabled children can participate must amount to more than "mere token gestures," according to the ruling in *Daniel R.R.* The IDEA requirement for accommodating disabled children in regular education is broad. But, the ruling says, a school district need not provide "every conceivable supplementary aid or service" to assist disabled children in regular education. Furthermore, regular education instructors are not required to devote all or even most of their time to one disabled child to the detriment of the entire class.

   A district also is not required to modify the regular education program beyond recognition. As the court held in *Daniel R.R.*: "[M]ainstreaming would be pointless if we forced instructors to modify the regular education curriculum to

the extent that the handicapped child is not required to learn any of the skills normally taught in regular education." Such extensive modifications would result in special education being taught in a regular education classroom.

3. **Will the child benefit educationally from regular education?** Central to this question is whether the child can achieve the "essential elements" of the regular education curriculum. Both the nature and severity of the child's handicap must be considered, as well as the curriculum and goals of the regular education class, in determining educational benefit. However, a disabled child cannot be expected to achieve on par with children who don't have disabilities before being permitted to attend the regular education classroom. Also, academic achievement is not the only purpose of mainstreaming. Allowing the child to be with children who aren't disabled can be beneficial in itself.

4. **What will be the child's overall educational experience in the mainstreamed environment?** Just because a child can receive only minimal academic benefit from regular education doesn't mean the child automatically should be excluded from regular education. Districts are advised to consider the child's overall educational experience in the mainstreamed environment, balancing the benefits of regular and special education. Children who can't comprehend many of the essential elements of a lesson still may receive great benefit from their nondisabled peers, who serve as language and behavior models.

   On the other hand, some children might become frustrated by their inability to succeed in the regular education classroom. If this frustration outweighs any benefit received from regular education, mainstreaming might prove detrimental to the child. Similarly, other children might need more structure than is available in the regular education setting. A school district must determine whether mainstreaming would be more beneficial or detrimental to a disabled child, considering both academic and social benefit.

5. **What effect does the disabled child's presence have on the regular classroom environment?** In determining the LRE, districts must consider whether the child's presence in a regular education classroom adversely affects the education other children are receiving. Two criteria should be considered: (1) whether the child engages in disruptive behavior that negatively affects the other children, and (2) whether the disabled child requires so much of the teacher's attention that the teacher is forced to ignore the other children. If the teacher spends so much time with the disabled child that the rest of the class suffers, it is likely that the child should be educated in another service configuration. If it is determined that the child cannot be educated full time in a regular education classroom, the child still should be mainstreamed to the maximum extent appropriate (e.g., for nonacademic classes and activities, such as gym, recess, music, art, or lunch).

   In short, placement in regular education is not an "all-or-nothing" proposition. Rather, school districts are required to offer a ***continuum of services*** for disabled children. A disabled child should be mainstreamed in regular education for as much of the time as is appropriate. Rarely will total exclusion from children without disabilities be deemed appropriate.

Reference

Arnold, J. & Dodge, H. (1994, October). Room for all. *The American School Board Journal*, 24-25.

Worth Quoting

"We base our support for the philosophy of inclusion on three fundamental arguments. First, we believe that inclusion has a legal base. The great majority of court cases have not upheld the traditional practice of segregating students with special educational needs. . . . A second argument for inclusion rests on the results of research on best practices. Research continues to show that students who are not pulled out do better than those who are segregated. . . . Finally, . . . a strong moral and ethical argument can be made for the "rightness" of inclusion: it is the best thing to do for the students. . . . In the future, students majoring in education are likely to regard the practice of segregating students with special needs in much the same way as we look upon racial segregation before the 1960s. It will be seen as an embarrassing chapter of our educational history." (Ray Van Dyke, Martha Ann Stallings, and Kenna Colley, "How to Build an Inclusive School Community," *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1995. Their experiences with inclusion are portrayed in the Academy Award-winning documentary, *Educating Peter*.)

NOTEWORTHY

Working Forum Finds Sense of Community, Co-teaching Among Traits of Successful Inclusive Schools

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) last year convened a Working Forum on Inclusive Schools with nine other education organizations.* They identified many schools across the country that have struggled with and solved various complex issues related to inclusive schools. Twelve schools were selected to participate in the forum to relate their planning and implementation stories. While the schools selected have many differences, they are not a representative sample of the schools and communities of North America. The information generated at the working forum is the focus of CEC's report, *Creating Schools for All Our Students: What 12 Schools Have to Say*. The report, which could serve as a blueprint for schools moving toward inclusion, covers such issues as effective planning, co-teaching, technology, and community involvement.

Many of the schools participating in the working forum agreed that fostering a ***sense of community*** was of utmost importance. All are trying some form of ***co-teaching***.

Sense of Community

Inclusive schools have a sense of interconnectedness among staff and children. Most of the schools participating in the forum did not have "building a school community" as a goal when they began their inclusive schools venture. But as school teams worked on including children with disabilities, they found their schools becoming more cohesive and collegial. As staff began to understand the power of their school community, they more consciously addressed ways to foster that sense of community. The forum schools developed a number of strategies to nurture a feeling of community.

A common vision. If the school as a whole shares the vision that all children need to be a respected part of the school community, that vision alone brings its own sense of community.

Problem-solving teams. In almost all the forum schools, a building-based team makes decisions about how students' individual needs are to be met. The problem-solving team meets regularly to plan what is needed for each child with disabilities. Team members work out such issues as whether the child should be in a general classroom for the whole day or part of the day, whether speech therapy should be provided in the student's classroom or in the therapist's office, and so on. More importantly, problem-solving teams determine the type of special instruction and the extent to which it is needed for individual children.

Parents as partners. All of the forum schools said that it is essential to consider parents as partners in the school community. When fully engaged, they volunteer in classrooms or at evening and weekend events and are the bridges between home and school communities. Keeping parents informed has sometimes meant that educators must listen to parents' fears that their children's education would be harmed by more inclusive policies. Participants in the working forum argued that those fears need to be answered, not by soothing words, but by concrete realities.

Teachers as partners. All of the schools that participated in the forum are using some form of co-teaching—a special education teacher and a general education teacher teamed together to instruct a class. Traditionally, teachers work in isolation from each other. Co-teaching requires teachers to give up some of that exclusivity in exchange for gaining a partner to share planning, teaching, discipline, and assessment.

Paraprofessionals as partners. In every school, the paraprofessionals were a quiet key to success. They are both the continuity and support for students, staff, and families. They are a critical element to both the planning and delivery of appropriate services to students.

Students as problem solvers. Students also need to be included in the partnerships and collegial relationships of the school community. Forum participants suggested several ways to do this:

- **Peer mediation**. Students trained in mediation use a rather formal procedure to help resolve disputes among other students.
- **Peer tutoring**. Students help other students learn and review material.

*Other participants in the working forum: American Association of School Administrators, American Federation of Teachers, The Council of Great City Schools, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of State Directors of Special Education, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Education Association, and National School Boards Association.

- **Cross-age tutoring**. Older students help younger students learn.
- **Cooperative learning**. Students within classrooms team up in cooperative learning groups.
- **Buddy systems**. Sometimes two children with disabilities are paired, and together the "buddies" enter a general classroom for part of the day with the special education teacher. A more usual form of the buddy system is to pair a child with a disability with a child without a disability. The mother of a child with a disability told other members of the forum that the father of her son's buddy told her that some days the major factor that made his son go to school was his responsibility to his buddy.

Community members as volunteers. Many schools have been working to increase community involvement in schools by requesting that homemakers, retirees, business people, and professionals "mentor" students.

Reducing the use of jargon. One of the barriers to creating a sense of community in schools is the use of specialized terms and acronyms that parents, community members, and even many teachers and paraprofessionals do not understand.

Time for planning. All participants in the working forum agreed that teaching many different kinds of children requires a great deal of planning on the part of teachers. When the only opportunity to plan is during lunch hours or before or after school, collaboration and the quality of instruction suffer. When some staff members are in the building only part of the day or week, collaboration becomes even more difficult. For these reasons, the forum schools carefully prepare common planning times for teachers and other staff members. Some principals feel so strongly about this issue that they themselves teach classes to give their teachers time to plan together.

Bringing services to the student. In many of the forum schools, education specialists, related services professionals, and paraprofessionals come to the classroom and work with individuals or groups of students. When pull-out services are needed, effective planning among teachers and related service professionals can prevent fragmentation. Students can obtain the specialized services they need at a mutually agreed upon time that does not interfere with classroom instruction.

Flexible scheduling. One issue facing all schools is how to manage instructional time in the most efficient way, not only to teach the curriculum, but also to build a sense of community. Forum participants suggested several strategies:

- **Separate academic and activity schedules**. Students who are grouped homogeneously for certain academic classes have the opportunity to interact with other students in nonacademic classes, which are grouped according to students' interests and change every nine weeks.
- **Teaching-learning teams**. Two middle schools in the forum divide each of their grades into teams of about 120 students, with 5 teachers per team. In some schools, teams stay together as the students progress through school. In others, students are part of a different team each year. In addition to their planning time, team teachers meet every day or every other day to discuss thematic approaches or overall teaching strategies. Parents who desire a progress report or who want to express a particular concern may attend the team meetings, and thus do not need to seek out individual teachers. In the forum's middle schools, every team included a special education teacher who works with the general teachers, making sure each student is appropriately accommodated within the curriculum.
- **Longer classes**. Some secondary schools are experimenting with block scheduling, in which students take fewer classes each semester but each class period is longer.
- **Taking a break from the normal schedule**. One secondary school has a mid-year "winter term" where special, intensive classes are grouped

Worth Quoting

"The controversy surrounding inclusion stems, in part, from disagreement among professionals about the meaning of inclusion. Why is inclusion any more controversial than mainstreaming? The fundamental concept appears to be the same. Indeed, the goal of special education should be to provide the knowledge and skills that students with learning disabilities need to lead full and independent lives. For many students, the least restrictive environment in which to accomplish this goal means full inclusion in the general classroom. For others, it may mean educational support in the form of part-time or full-time special classes. Meeting the needs of individual students with learning disabilities must remain the priority and the goal in any inclusion discussion." (Cecil D. Mercer and Holly Lane, "Principles of Responsible Inclusion," *LDA Newsbriefs*, Vol. 29, No. 4, July/Aug 1994)

by interest rather than ability level for three weeks. Various community and independent projects are undertaken during this time by students with and without disabilities working together.

- **Homerooms**. One secondary school schedules a half hour between first and second period for "student pursuit time," during which students consult with teachers and each other. Once a week, students gather in a classroom with one teacher to discuss schoolwide issues or work on study skills. This is an opportunity for students who might not ordinarily see each other during the school day to interact and cooperate together on specific skills or subjects.

Co-teaching

All of the schools in the working forum are trying some form of co-teaching. The co-taught class is sometimes bigger than a normal-sized single class, but smaller than two classes combined. The teachers who participated in the forum are adamant that co-teaching benefits not only all students but the teachers as well.

Complementary knowledge and skills. General education teachers and special education teachers bring a tremendous amount of knowledge and skills to the task of teaching, and by being paired together, they pool their expertise. Generally speaking, general education teachers have more in-depth knowledge about specific curricula or subject areas being taught. Special education teachers generally know more about modifying and "breaking down" curriculum and adapting teaching methodologies to meet the needs of individual children. When general and special education teachers instruct students and work together, they have more to offer ***all*** of the students. In addition, as teachers learn from each other, compromise, and resolve disagreements, students see adults doing exactly what they are being asked to do.

Evaluation and feedback. One of the benefits of co-teaching is that partners provide each other with evaluation and feedback. While one teacher teaches, the co-teacher can act as an audience, sensing when some students are floundering and in need of further instruction. Thus, "I'm finally getting the kind of moment-by-moment evaluation I can trust, not a written summary once or twice a year," reported one teacher at the working forum.

For teachers to reach the point where they welcome such constant evaluation and feedback, they need to have worked out many of the issues involved in teaching together. Teachers need to have discussed not just their overall philosophies of education and teaching, but also the "little things," such as whether or not students may chat about their assignments, sharpen pencils, and move around the classroom.

Absences. Another benefit of co-teaching is that when one teacher is absent, the class can still proceed with the co-teacher and a substitute, instead of remaining in a "holding pattern," as is often the case with the use of substitute teachers. Teachers did emphasize, however, that a substitute teacher is needed when a teaching partner is absent.

Continuity between grades. In one elementary school that has used co-teaching for five years, one of the co-teachers "is promoted" with the class at the end of the year. Therefore, each year the students have one familiar teacher and one new teacher, to help them begin the new term without a great deal of "getting acquainted" time. Although it is sometimes difficult for the teachers to break up partnerships after just one year, the continuity has proven very helpful to the students. Teachers who have co-taught then train other teachers in co-teaching methods.

Enhanced teaching methods. Having two teachers in the classroom makes some teaching methods more effective. For example, hands-on activities—proven to be among the most effective methods of teaching—are much easier to plan and carry out with two teachers in the room.

Cooperative learning groups are increasingly used in classrooms around the country and can be more successful with co-teaching. Cooperative learning groups can sometimes get "bogged down" when they are facilitated by only one teacher. When two teachers are circulating and helping the groups of students, much more teaching is accomplished.

Testing. Testing can be more flexible with co-teaching. For example, some co-teaching teams permit each student to decide whether to take written or oral tests, based on the student's preferred "learning style." While one teacher administers written tests in one area, the other administers the test orally in another area.

Discipline. Co-teaching is a tremendous help, as well, in managing discipline problems. If a student is misbehaving, one teacher can be devoted to that problem while the class continues uninterrupted.

The "space" barrier. One barrier to co-teach-

ing that teachers repeatedly discussed at the working forum, although they were sometimes embarrassed about its "trivial" nature, was the issue of personal space. Teachers are accustomed to being the "rulers" of their rooms and are notorious for disliking any interference. Sharing rooms can be especially difficult. Some special education teachers referred to the welcome they initially received from their general teacher partner as, "This is my room and this is my desk. You may have the wastebasket." The fact is that teachers carefully organize their rooms to reflect their own teaching styles. Teachers have particular ideas about which activities should take place where, and which supplies belong where. To share that control is difficult.

For special education teachers, who are usually the ones asked to give up their classrooms and work in other teachers' classrooms, the territorial issue can be especially painful. Co-teaching "removed me from my own little room where I could do what I thought was best for my students," said one teacher, who said she initially had problems of "ownership."

"But, my students were doing well. I could see growth. I saw they were exposed to things they never would have been exposed to in my self-contained class," remarked this teacher. It was difficult for that teacher to communicate to her co-teacher the problems she had in sharing her authority and her environment, but she overcame those difficulties when she saw the benefits to the children involved.

The issue of territory extends even to the issue of desks. "I know it sounds trivial," said this same teacher, "but I needed a desk so that I could tell students when they're finished with their work that they should put it on 'my' desk." She acquired a small typing table that solved the problem.

If the issue of territoriality is addressed outright, it can usually be overcome, and the partnership can flourish. If ignored, it is likely to be a stumbling block.

One principal at the working forum suggested that the "personal space" of teachers should be removed from the learning space of the classroom altogether, in much the same way that college teachers have offices separate from the neutral territory of classrooms.

Teachers report that they can tell when the partnership is working when they stop referring to "my kids" and "your kids" but instead say, "our kids." They also agree that all teaching partnerships require collaboration, compromise, and extensive communication.

For more information about the Working Forum on Inclusive Schools, contact The Council for Exceptional Children at 800/CEC-READ.

From Creating Schools for All Our Students: What 12 schools have to say, a product of the Working Forum on Inclusive Schools; used with permission from The Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, VA.

Forum Suggests Ways, by Role Group, to Create More Inclusive Schools

What State and Local School Board Members and Central Administrators Can Do

1. Make sure funding follows the students, so schools can make placement decisions based on the needs of the student rather than the location of the money. That way, schools can hire the people and obtain the resources required to serve the child.
2. Provide time and money for continuing professional development of teachers, administrators, related services professionals, paraprofessionals, and support service workers. Let school staffs plan professional development, which should at least include the following:
   a. information on specific conditions and disabilities,
   b. specific information on how to manage discipline problems and encourage good behavior and a good attitude toward learning, and
   c. specific information on how to accommodate different learning styles and how to encourage learning in all children.
3. Provide incentive grants to schools to develop their own inclusive policies and practices.
4. Build in planning time for teachers, related services professionals, and paraprofessionals during the school year so they can plan—not only individually, but as grades and teams. Parapro-

fessionals need to be included in the planning process, and few school districts have addressed this issue.

5. When building new schools, make sure buildings are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities and can accommodate an inclusive program. Assess existing buildings for changes needed to make them fully accessible.
6. Use Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) as long-range planning tools with short-term strategies, so all students with disabilities graduate with as much confidence and ability to function in the world as possible. Consider the use of IEPs for all students.
7. Support the development of new assessment methods. Portfolios and curriculum-based assessments should play a larger role, standardized tests a smaller one.
8. When hiring new professionals, seek candidates with collaborative skills, knowledge of disabilities, and a desire to work in inclusive schools.
9. Permit principals and school-based teams to make decisions about scheduling, staffing, curriculum, and materials.
10. Remember that paraprofessionals are integral to the success of inclusive schools.
11. Make sure that paraprofessionals assigned to specific children with disabilities are not precluded from providing incidental benefits to other children.
12. Give foreign language credit for courses in sign language.
13. Remember that inclusive schools are not another way of saying placement in the "least ***expensive*** environment."
14. Maintain access to the ***full continuum of services and settings***. While inclusive schools serve the needs of many students, some children will need special education and related services in other environments.
15. Involve associations, unions, and other pertinent groups in the planning and implementation of inclusive school practices.

What Associations and Unions Can Do

1. Participate in districtwide and school-based planning.
2. Develop policies to support the development and implementation of effective inclusive schools.
3. Make certain that members have the appropriate working conditions and resources to assure good practice in an inclusive school.
4. Monitor the progress of inclusive schools and provide feedback to members, school officials, and the public.
5. Help schools obtain the resources necessary to run an effective inclusive school.
6. Counsel and assist members in developing new roles for themselves to maximize their value in an inclusive school.
7. Help model and create environments that facilitate collaborative working relationships among school personnel and parents.
8. Provide professional development that will help members work with students with disabilities, and research practices that will improve the delivery of quality instruction.

What Principals Can Do

1. Organize a team of parents and staff members, including yourself, to help plan inclusive school strategies and practices.
2. Make sure teachers, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, related services personnel, other building support staff, and parents get the ongoing training and support they need.
3. Make sure teachers and paraprofessionals get the planning time they need.
4. Arrange visits for teachers and other staff to inclusive schools.
5. Explore co-teaching with your staff and ask for volunteers. Teachers who are forced into co-teaching may resent it and fail before they even start. Begin with one classroom where success is likely and work from there. Success will stimulate emulation.
6. Know the rights of students with disabilities, their families' rights, and the responsibilities of school personnel. Be sure that the inclusive school efforts are consistent with those rights and responsibilities.
7. Use the same report card for all students. If a child is being assessed by different criteria, this can be noted on the standard form.
8. Make sure parents are full partners in your school. Parents are children's first teachers and

commonly have an enormous store of knowledge about their children. They are often the key to creating a sense of community.

9. Have a clear, understandable policy on discipline so that every child and every adult in the school knows what is expected. This policy is especially important for children with behavioral and emotional problems and the adults who care for them.
10. Develop a school- or districtwide behavior management plan, because of the additional and often unpredictable nature of supports needed for students with emotional and behavioral difficulties.
11. Make sure that the focus is always on what each child needs. Some children may need to be away from the distractions of general classrooms for part or all of the day. Provide a variety of settings and options, as determined by student needs and staff.
12. Provide teachers with a list of resources, including the phone numbers of specialists inside and outside the school system.
13. Monitor and assess constantly. Begin with baseline data and gather information from a number of sources—including observations; test scores; and parent, student, and teacher surveys. Use evaluation information to inform and direct changes in inclusive school practices.
14. Engage the outside community to work in the school. Retirees and local businesses are resources that can be used to connect students with the outside world.
15. Remember that not everything will work. Be willing to fail, regroup, and try a different approach. Let your staff know that failure is something to be learned from, not something to be punished for.
16. Empower and support your staff. It takes all of your combined talent to be an inclusive school.

What Teachers Can Do

1. Be open to the possibility of including a student with disabilities in your classroom.
2. Seek the proper information, professional development, and support. If you are teaching a child with a disability, make sure you know about the child's limitations and potential and about available curriculum methodologies and technology to help the child learn. Insist that any needed services be provided and that the paraprofessional working in your room also get the proper training. If the school is resistant, and the district unresponsive, work with your teacher union or association to get the support you need.
3. Use a buddy system. Pair students with disabilities with children who can help. Occasionally permit students without disabilities to accompany their buddies to pull-out programs to let them see what goes on. This reduces the sense of mystery and difference.
4. Use a variety of teaching strategies. Rely less on "lecture, question, discussion" and more on hands-on activities, peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and individualized instruction.
5. With co-teaching:
   - Co-teaching relationships should be voluntary. Choose someone you respect and can work well with. As with any other partnership, you need to work hard to make it succeed.
   - Plan on spending time discussing all the decisions that need to be made in a classroom, from the big philosophical issues to the small ones, such as when students may sharpen their pencils and talk about their assignments. Discuss the territorial issues of where things belong, what activities should take place where, and who controls what desk.
   - Remember the advice of one co-teacher—"If the marriage isn't working, get a divorce." (But you might want to try counseling first!)

What Paraprofessionals Can Do

1. Learn as much as possible about the strengths of the children assigned to you.

Worth Quoting

"One primary flaw in the current continuum of alternative placements is that movement between placements is usually a bureaucratic nightmare. Decisions should be made carefully, but when a placement does not work as well as anticipated, changes in placement decisions should be swift. It is unconscionable for a student to languish in an inappropriate placement because of bureaucratic hassles. . . . The availability of an option for inclusion on a partial or trial basis would encourage students, parents, and educators to choose inclusion more readily." (Cecil D. Mercer and Holly Lane, "Principles of Responsible Inclusion," *LDA Newsbriefs*, Vol. 29, No. 4, July/Aug 1994)

2. Work with all the children; don't concentrate only on the children with disabilities.
3. Seek the proper training and support you need to manage behavioral problems, encourage success, and accommodate different learning styles.

What Support Service Staff Can Do

1. Make schools welcoming places for all students. School secretaries, food service workers, maintenance workers, and bus drivers all help make schools welcoming, comfortable places or forbidding, punishing places.
2. Learn about the students and what to expect of them.
3. Be an active member of the school community.

What Related Services Staff Can Do

1. Work in classrooms more and in separate environments less.
2. "Role release" by training teachers and paraprofessionals how to do some of the more routine aspects of your job. Psychologists can work with teachers in identifying different learning styles and modifying the curriculum to accommodate them.
3. Be collaborative. Serve on problem-solving teams and be involved in other planning efforts.
4. Be an active part of the school community.

What Parents Can Do

1. Know your child. You are your child's first teacher and often know better about his or her capabilities than anyone else. Communicate your hopes and plans to your child's teacher.
2. Actively participate in your child's school. Treat all students and other members of the school community with respect.
3. If your child has a disability, explain it to the teacher and discuss what services you think your child needs. Monitor the classroom carefully to see if your child is learning as much as he or she is able.
4. Be a team player. Everyone working together will create a better school.

What Colleges and Universities Can Do

1. In setting admissions standards, agree to look at student portfolios, rather than only SAT scores and grades.
2. Offer teacher training programs that equip future teachers with the skills to modify curricula and use a variety of teaching strategies to instruct all students. Also, provide student teaching opportunities in inclusive schools.
3. Give foreign language credit for sign language.

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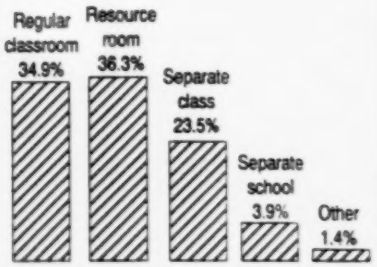
Special-Needs Students

Where are they served?

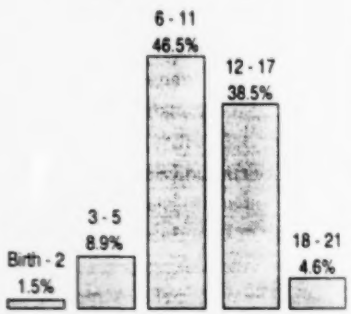
Education environment, school year 1991-92



5,170,242 children (birth-21) received special education services in 1992-93

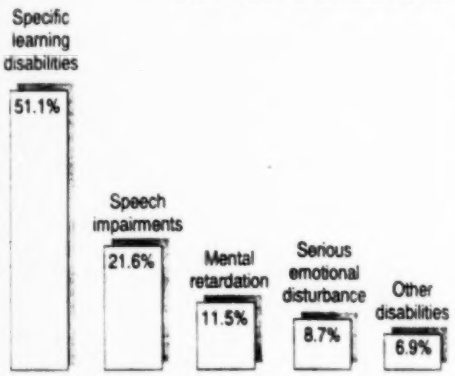
How old are they?

Percentage of children served by age group, 1992-93



What kinds of disabilities do they have?

Disabilities of students (ages 6-21) receiving special education services, 1992-93



U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 16th Annual Report to Congress, 1994

Policies and Position Statements on Inclusive Schools

National Association of State Boards of Education

Resolution 94-6: Equal Educational Opportunity
B. Students with Special Needs

1. To ensure equal educational opportunities, services should be provided for special student needs. Learning programs should identify and address the individual needs and learning styles of all students, including those who are disabled, disadvantaged, migrant, gifted or talented, parenting or pregnant, minority, or of limited English proficiency.

2. State boards should ensure that policies are developed and implemented which guarantee that all students are educated in school environments that include rather than exclude them.... Inclusion means that all children must be educated in supported, heterogeneous, age-appropriate, natural, child-focused school environments for the purpose of preparing them for full participation in our diverse and integrated society.

(National Association of State Boards of Education, 1994. Resolution 94-6: Equal Educational Opportunity)

National School Boards Association (NSBA) Inclusion Issues

At the local level, we see increasing efforts to include students with disabilities in the general curriculum. These efforts are likely to continue. **But greater inclusion does not require any changes in federal law.** IDEA already requires that students be educated in the "least restrictive environment" and any changes in the law are likely to produce significant disruption at the local level and unnecessary and costly new litigation.

Inclusion can work effectively for large numbers of students with disabilities while enriching the classroom experience of all students. But for inclusion to work effectively frequently requires extensive teacher training, additional classroom aides, and in some cases, the purchase of expensive additional classroom technology.

To promote greater inclusion without providing the resources to make it work offers a false promise of improved opportunities for students with disabilities, and the real possibility of disruptions in the learning environment. The federal government needs to make the resources available to local school districts so more inclusive special education programming, where appropriate, can be highly successful.

Likewise, we must understand that full inclusion is not appropriate for some students with disabilities. For students with disabilities who require extensive individualized assistance or who do not have sufficiently well developed social skills, instruction in the general curriculum may not be beneficial. Many teachers and disability advocates share our belief that full inclusion is not always an educationally sound strategy.

(Testimony of Boyd Boehlje, President, National School Boards Association, before the House Subcommittee on Select Education and Civil Rights, July 19, 1994)

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Platform 94-95

Equal Education Opportunity

NAESP supports efforts that promote the right of every child to an equal education opportunity regardless of ethnicity, handicap, race, religious belief, sex, or socioeconomic status. ('82, '92)

Student Disabilities

NAESP urges school systems to provide educational programs that will permit all children to develop their abilities and aptitudes to the fullest extent possible.

The Association endorses and supports the concepts embodied in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, with emphasis in early identification beginning at birth, guaranteeing that all youngsters, irrespective of handicapping and/or health conditions, are entitled to a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

NAESP supports inclusion of special education students, as appropriate, in regular classrooms with their peers in their neighborhood schools. To facilitate the successful inclusion of special education students, NAESP recognizes that appropriate financial resources, staff development, and support services must follow the child with disabilities.

The Association also recognizes that compliance with legal mandates presents additional managerial and administrative duties that impede the orderly and efficient delivery of educational services to all students.

NAESP supports continuation and expansion of related services to local districts by appropriate state and community service agencies. Additional state and federal financial support is imperative for local school districts to comply with the provisions of these laws. (76, '77, '79, '90, '91, '93, '94)

(National Association of Elementary School Principals Platform 94-95)

National Education Association (NEA) Policy Statement on Appropriate Inclusion

The National Education Association supports and encourages appropriate inclusion. Appropriate inclusion is characterized by practices and programs that provide for the following on a sustained basis. Inclusion practices and programs that lack these fundamental characteristics must end.

NEA policy cites the following items as essential to any inclusion program:

- A full continuum of placement options and services within each option. Placement and services must be determined for each student by a team that includes all stakeholders and must be specified in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Appropriate professional development, as part of normal work activity, of all educators and support staff associated with such programs. Appropriate training must also be provided for administrators, parents, and other stakeholders.
- Adequate time, as part of the normal school day, to engage in coordinated and collaborative planning on behalf of all students.
- Class sizes that are responsive to student needs.
- Staff and technical assistance that is specifically appropriate to student and teacher needs.

(Adopted by delegates to NEA's Representative Assembly, July 1994)

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

The AFT opposes . . . any movement or program that has the goal of placing all students with disabilities in general education classrooms regardless of the nature or severity of their disabilities, their ability to behave or function appropriately in the classroom, or the educational benefits they and their general education peers can derive; . . . The AFT denounces . . . placing too many students with disabilities in individual general classrooms; placing students with disabilities in general education classrooms without services, professional development, or paraprofessional assistance; refusing to assist teachers who are having problems meeting the unique needs of students with disabilities; and changing IEPs en masse so that students with disabilities may be placed in general education classrooms without supports and services and irrespective of the appropriateness of the placement; . . .

The AFT . . . support[s] the continuum of alternative placements and the educational placement of students with disabilities within the least restrictive environment appropriate. . . .

The AFT seeks . . . to address the problem of the high percentages of minority students in special education. . . .

(AFT Resolution adopted at 1994 National Convention)

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Policy on Inclusive Schools and Community Settings

The Council for Exceptional Children believes all children, youth, and young adults with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate education and/or services that lead to an adult life characterized by satisfying relations with others, independent living, productive engagement in the community, and participation in society at large. To achieve such outcomes, there must exist for all children, youth, and young adults a rich variety of early intervention, educational, and vocational program options and experiences. Access to these programs and experiences should be based on individual educational needs and desired outcomes. Furthermore, students and their families or guardians, as members of the planning team, may recommend the placement, curriculum option, and the exit document to be pursued.

CEC believes that a continuum of services must be available for all children, youth, and young adults. CEC also believes that . . . children, youth, and young adults with disabilities should be served whenever possible in general education classrooms in inclusive neighborhood schools and community settings. Such settings should be strengthened and supported by an infusion of specially trained personnel and other appropriate supportive practices according to the individual needs of the child.

(*CEC Policies for Delivery of Services to Exceptional Children.* Adopted by the Delegate Assembly of The Council for Exceptional Children in April 1993)

Children and Adults With Attention Deficit Disorders (CH.A.D.D.)

. . . . We believe that the concept of inclusion should reflect society's commitment that every child be educated in the environment that is most appropriate to that child's identified needs. CH.A.D.D. supports inclusion defined as education which provides access to appropriate support and remedia-

(continued on page 28)

Worth Quoting

"Recently I heard someone talk about a 'tolerance theory' of inclusion. The implications were that some regular teachers have a greater tolerance range than others toward accepting students with disabilities in their classroom. This no doubt is true. However, the education of students with disabilities is too important to be left to teachers' choices of whom they will or will not accept in their classes. Needing assistance, training, materials, and guidance is understandable; arbitrary refusal to accept students with disabilities is not." (Thomas P. Lombardi, *Responsible Inclusion of Students with Disabilities*, PDK Fastback 373, 1994)

Number of Children Age 6–21 Served Under IDEA, Part B, by Disability

State		All Disabilities	Specific Learning Disabilities	Speech or language Impairments	Mental Retardation	Serious Emotional Disturbance	Multiple Disabilities	Hearing Impairments	Orthopedic Impairments	Other Health Impaired	Visual Impairments	Autism	Deaf–Blindness	Traumatic Brain Injury
KENTUCKY	1991–92	66,789	23,417	20,840	17,028	3,142	846	485	389	301	332	0	9	0
	1992–93	66,671	23,335	20,070	17,148	3,257	947	481	387	347	324	38	4	33
	1993–94	66,826	22,927	18,348	8,106	3,957	1,159	793	399	506	481	75	4	71
TENNESSEE	1991–92	102,987	53,989	23,754	12,175	2,363	1,465	1,010	1,070	1,865	760	285	12	65
	1992–93	103,311	56,468	24,411	12,279	2,590	1,602	1,058	1,030	2,736	735	304	9	89
	1993–94	113,928	56,872	24,396	3,019	2,839	1,615	1,111	1,102	3,974	765	371	12	115
VIRGINIA	1991–92	105,469	55,379	23,868	12,344	9,067	1,823	1,057	766	570	95	490	2	5
	1992–93	112,794	59,844	24,741	12,415	9,902	2,404	1,045	727	1,071	57	539	4	45
	1993–94	116,382	60,633	24,994	13,040	10,596	2,840	1,054	750	1,734	41	620	1	80
WEST VIRGINIA	1991–92	39,483	18,593	10,554	7,446	2,091	0	279	284	14	137	75	1	9
	1992–93	40,057	18,762	10,990	7,293	2,101	0	294	266	90	130	101	0	30
	1993–94	38,730	17,914	10,618	7,154	1,956	0	273	237	223	152	148	1	54

Ed Note: Thanks to Soleil Gregg of the AEL staff for the arduous task of compiling the data tables displayed in Around the Region.

AROUND THE REGION

★ Kentucky ★ Tennessee ★ West Virginia

Placement of Children Receiving Special Education Under IDEA Ages 6–21 (Least Restrictive Environment)

	State	Regular Class	Resource Room	Separate Class	Public Separate Facility	Private Separate Facility	Public Residential Facility	Private Residential Facility	Homebound Hospital
KENTUCKY	1991-92	24,483	30,365	9,306	725	7	66	77	273
	1992-93	26,985	29,808	8,634	749	42	8	25	420
	1993-94	28,399	27,871	9,149	422	58	634	15	275
TENNESSEE	1991-92	48,748	29,064	18,913	918	556	20	17	1,153
	1992-93	50,303	31,901	19,265	784	623	19	20	1,145
	1993-94	57,288	28,778	17,222	764	686	47	32	1,133
VIRGINIA	1991-92	40,507	33,494	28,683	967	695	566	416	136
	1992-93	42,959	36,473	29,349	1,023	763	503	421	163
	1993-94	44,152	39,520	29,837	930	814	511	391	225
WEST VIRGINIA	1991-92	2,490	27,875	8,749	235	8	51	22	2
	1992-93	2,680	27,745	8,609	801	108	22	20	147
	1993-94	3,148	25,468	7,173	146	10	18	4	93

Number of Special Education Teachers Employed and Needed to Serve Children with Disabilities Ages 6-21

	Kentucky			Tennessee			Virginia			West Virginia		
	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Employed	4,404	4,593	*NA (similar to 92-93)	4,794	4,754	4,081	8,477	9,332	8,657	3,228	2,838	*NA
Needed	431	228	*NA (similar to 92-93)	213	144	78	785	1,001	60	247	*NA	*NA

*Not available

Sources (for Around the Region):

- U. S. Department of Education. (1994). To assure the free appropriate public education of all children with disabilities: Sixteenth annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington, DC: Author.
- Kentucky Department of Education, Division of Exceptional Children Services
- Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Special Education
- Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education Services
- West Virginia Department of Education , Office of Special Education Programs and Assurances

INSIDE AEL

Results of Inclusion Survey to be Produced on Audiotape

AEL's School Governance and Administration program is conducting a regional survey on the implementation of inclusion at the secondary school level. State-level officials and professional association staff in each of AEL's four states—Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia—were asked to identify exemplary secondary schools. AEL staff is now conducting structured telephone interviews with principals and special educators at these schools. They are asked to describe courses special needs students are taking; schedules of students and special educators; collaboration of special and regular educators; and any existing arrangements for joint planning time, training, and other support services. A special effort is being made to compare rural and nonrural inclusion arrangements. The results of the interviews will be reported on an audiotape titled "Voices from the Field: Secondary School Inclusion in the AEL Region." Watch for announcements in future issues of *The Link*.

Two AEL Projects Aim to Identify Effective Inclusion Strategies

The passage of federal legislation, as well as recent court decisions, is causing both special and regular educators to carefully re-examine their programs and services for special-needs children. Several states, including the four in AEL's Region, are responding to federal mandates by establishing policies, regulations, or recommendations to encourage voluntary inclusion practices by schools. To help the Region's educators as they move toward more inclusive schooling, AEL's Classroom Instruction program is sponsoring two activities: (1) a study group of Virginia teachers is looking at effective inclusive practices and (2) groups of teachers with inclusion experience are participating in focus group interviews in all four AEL states.

The Virginia teachers are working with AEL, the Virginia Education Association, and the College of William and Mary to investigate teacher concerns and solutions related to inclusion. The study group is comprised of seven pairs of co-teachers—regular and special educators—who plan, consult about students, and teach together. The teachers' work is organized around seven themes that emerged from early data: (1) teachers—relationships; (2) teachers—instruction; (3) students; (4) families/community; (5) laws/regulations/procedures; (6) classroom management, scheduling, and planning time; and (7) administrators. Each study group member collected colleagues' questions and concerns related to each theme and responded in reflective writing sessions to concerns raised most frequently. Each of the seven pairs worked as partners to analyze and summarize responses; the entire study group is collectively editing the resulting summaries.

The second activity began by inviting more than 230 educators—regular and special education teachers with at least one year of experience with inclusion—to participate in small, focus group interviews across the Region. A total of 143 educators from 47 school districts participated in one of 16 small-group discussions. Early analysis of the data shows that the most frequently mentioned concerns are in the following areas:

- time for collaborative planning and teaching,
- sharing responsibilities between special and regular educators,
- scheduling of students and teachers,
- funding, and
- identification of students for services.

Strategies most often mentioned by the groups as effective in inclusive classrooms include cooperative learning, peer tutoring, classroom discussion of individual differences, lesson and testing modifications, pair or team teaching (co-teaching), and grading alternatives.

AEL plans to publish the final results of both projects in early fall 1995. Watch for announcements in future issues of *The Link*. For more information about either of these activities, contact AEL's Classroom Instruction program.

FREE RESOURCE

Far West Laboratory recently produced Policy Update #4, "Special Education: At a Crossroads," on the topic of inclusion. It is available at no charge from Far West Laboratory, 730 Harrison St., San Francisco, CA 94107; 415/565-3000 (reference order # POPU04).

(*continued from page 24*)

tion at every level to facilitate each child's ability to participate and achieve. The environment in which these services can best be delivered depends on the needs of the individual student.

Many children with disabilities are educated successfully in regular classrooms with appropriate accommodations and supports. However, others require alternative environments to optimize their achievement. CH.A.D.D. supports this continuum of services and placements. . . .

(*The CH.A.D.D.ER Box*, Vol. 6, No. 4, June 1993)

Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)

[LDA] does not support "full inclusion"* or any policies that mandate the same placement, instruction, or treatment for ***all*** students with learning disabilities. Many students with learning disabilities benefit from being served in the regular education classroom. However, the regular education classroom is not the appropriate placement for a number of students with learning disabilities who may need alternative instructional environments, teaching strategies, and/or materials that cannot or will not be provided within the context of a regular classroom placement.

LDA believes that decisions regarding educational placement of students with disabilities must be based on the needs of each individual student rather than administrative convenience or budgetary considerations and must be the results of a cooperative effort involving the educators, parents, and the student when appropriate.

LDA strongly supports the IDEA . . . [and] believes that the placement of ***all*** children with disabilities in the regular classroom is as great a violation of IDEA as is the placement of ***all*** children in separate classrooms on the basis of their type of disability.

(LDA, *Position paper on full inclusion of all students with learning disabilities in the regular education classroom*, January 1993)

*LDA defines full inclusion as the "practice in which all students with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability and need for related services, receive their total education within the regular education classroom in their home school."

The LINK

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